

10. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 8 comprising extending the model using new data to add new nodes to the tree.

11. (Amended) A method of representing a data element derived from an object or image by processing signals corresponding to the object or image, the method comprising expressing the data element in terms of a representation derived according to claim 1.

15. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 involving data derived from an image or images in a sequence of images.

16. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the object or image corresponds to a person or a face.

19. (Amended) A method of matching or classifying a query data element derived from an object or image by processing signals corresponding to the object or image, the method comprising comparing a descriptor of the query data element according to claim 17 with database descriptor elements according to claim 17 using a matching function.

20. (Amended) Apparatus set up to execute a method according to claim 1.

22. (Amended) Computer program for executing a method according to any one of claim 1.